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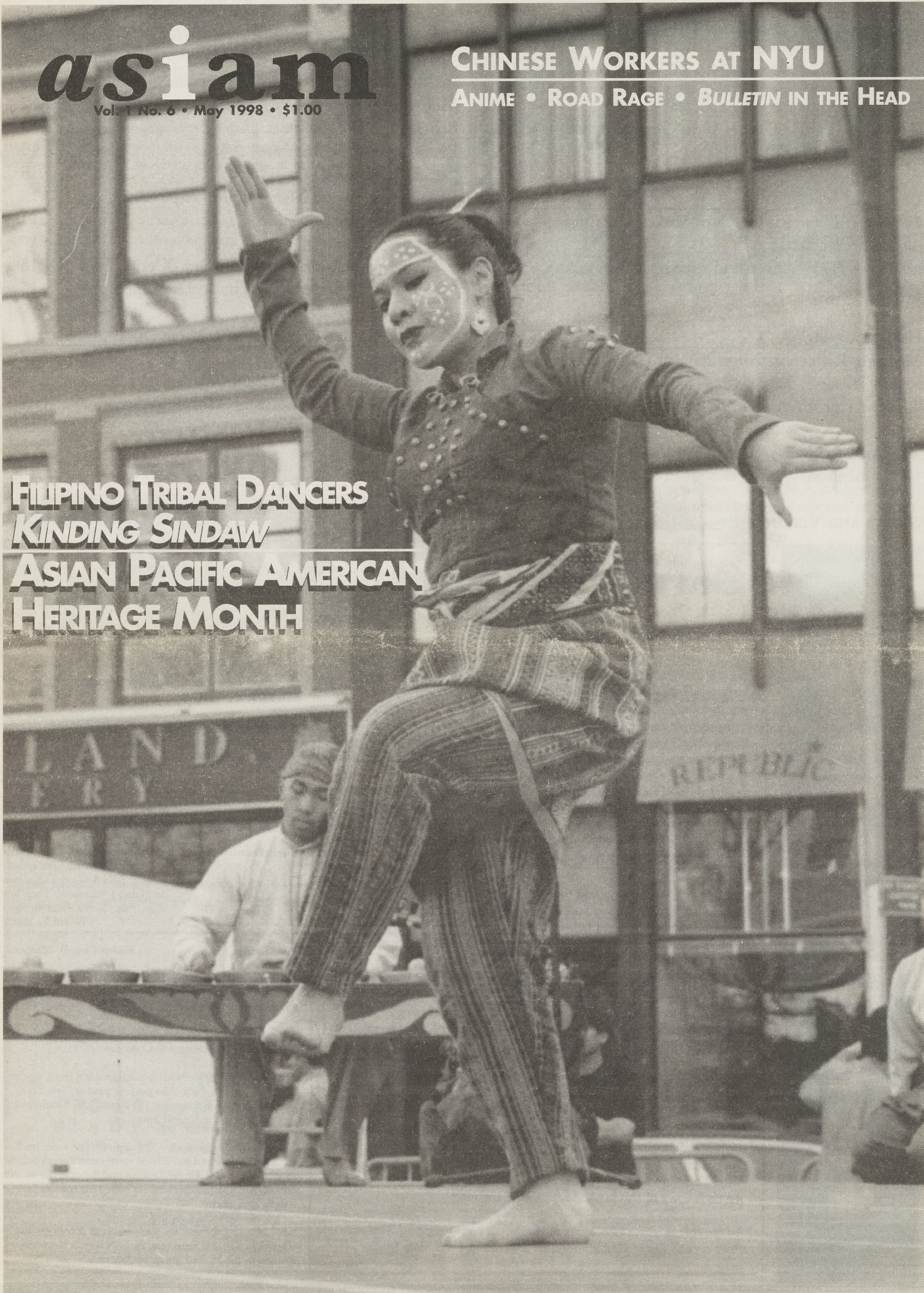
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CHINESE WORKERS AT NYU

ANIME • ROAD RAGE • BULLETIN IN THE HEAD

FILIPINO TRIBAL DANCERS
KINDING SINDAW

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH



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From the Editors

Carefully Taught

Almost fifty years ago, before Asian America became a reality, three men created a drama, nominally about World War II, but it was really about fighting for racial tolerance, especially for Asians. Despite its overwhelming popularity and winning the Pulitzer Prize, two Georgian legislators publically expressed their distaste, objecting to its "propaganda".

What they objected to was the playwrights' statement that we learn to fear and hate when we are young, that we have to be taught to be afraid of squinty eyes and a different shade of skin.

Half a century later, the lessons have not been learned. Below the radar of the media, the District Attorney's office of Onondaga County, New York last month released its report of the beating of six Asian American students from Syracuse University outside of a Denny's restaurant on April 11, 1997 by other white patrons.

What makes the report outrageous was that while the DA's office believes that the white patrons perpetrated the attack, the Asian students' accounts should not be believed, for no apparent reason. "Although we believe he (Mr. Warnock) may have thrown the first punch, which he denies, we think he is being truthful as to the other events he related to us." This does not make sense.

Asian American organizations are asking that the U.S. Justice Department renew their investigation into this incident. We also ask that New York Attorney General Dennis Vacco take this investigation from the Onondaga DA. All that is being asked is that a grand jury be given a chance to examine the facts discovered and draw the conclusions that the DA's office was afraid to make: that a serious crime was committed.

What else is there to do? Celebrate and make a statement this May, the 19th annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. If you are free on Sunday, May 3, join us at Union Square and take in what there is to offer. There are also many other events this month: check them out on the back cover of this paper. Learn something new.

By the way, the men who wrote in 1948 were Jerome Logan, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. The musical was *South Pacific*.

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I pictured the windshield shattering before my eyes as Chris slammed on the brakes just in time before his sleek maroon Firebird almost became one with the car in front of him. A sigh of relief came when the seatbelt locked.

I was still scrunched up in the passenger seat as the baby Air Jordan sneakers that hung from his rearview mirror were swinging wildly as if they wanted to just run out. Maybe they were scared too. My breathing was still irregular, but at least I was still alive.

"Fucking asshole!" he screamed as we managed to somehow swerve ahead of the other car.

The vein on his neck was protruding and pumping strongly. We were still going down Second Avenue pretty fast, despite the previous incident.

Under normal circumstances, these words would have never come out of his mouth. It was then that I learned that Chris' driving manner was so inconsistent with how he conducted his everyday life. In fact, he is one of the most patient and kindest people I have encountered in my life. But once he gets behind the wheel, he becomes impatient and just doesn't give a damn. Maybe he's a schizophrenic. Maybe it's just road rage.

ROAD RAGE:

Could this be a disguise for the defiance of the stereotypical Asian American male? Subconsciously, it is.

Driving is a cooperative effort amongst strangers. When someone deviates from this, it provokes a subconscious reaction and loss of control which causes them to act out their frustrations.

The model minority myth is already present: Asian Americans are not expected to be uncooperative. Men are always out to prove something to someone, whether it is to their peers, women, or sometimes, to themselves. So, when provoked, this insane driving manner may sometimes push a person beyond that stress line and thus, justifies this paradigm

SIGN OF ASIAN AMERICAN MACHISMO?

EYLISA LEE

for Asian-American men. They've always been the butt of racial jokes, constantly taunted for having the smallest penis, lacking sexual prowess, or even worse, stereotyped as passive and unorganized. By getting behind the wheel of a car, the Asian-American male proves himself and possesses total control of his space.

"Think about it," my friend Henry offers. "The car makes all men equal, regardless of their race, intelligence level or penis size. The vehicle is merely an extension of our masculinity and our way of controlling the environment."

"It's all about being in control," my friend Joe says. "When you first get your license, you think you're invincible."

However, it's not just about feeling in control. It's about the car. It's all about status. The right car, all tricked out with the tinted windows and phat rims will gain the attention of both genders. The wrong car — multi-colored and the size of a boat — will also get the attention of both genders. Either way, the insane and mindless driving will still prevail. Men with the tricked out car will look cool when their car speeds ahead when the light turns green. Men with the crappy cars will not care if their car gets messed up or not.

So maybe Asian American males are not different from other males. Perhaps it's just that males all yearn the power to dominate their environment.

Mind Boggler

Connie Lau

Here's something to mess with your mind!

Example: 12 = M. in a Y 12 Months in a Year

13 = S. on the A. F.
32 = D.F. at which W. F.
18 = H. on a G. C.

90 = D. in a R. A.
200 = D. for P. G. in M
8 = S. on a S. S.

3 = B. M., S. H. T. R.
4 = Q. in a G.
24 = H. in a D.

When you are done, search through this issue to find the answers....

Fiction

A NIGHT IN THE LIFE, SHE SAID

Tong Sui

After a long day playing ma jong, it was girls' night out. Standing near us is the usual group of girls, sporting tight-ass black polyester pants with paper-thin jackets to match — usually with some tight and tiny tank to go with it. We've been waiting for about half an hour and we're still waiting to get into this party. All I'll have to say about this is that it better be a freakin' good party.

"Yo man, are ya lettin' me in or not? If not, I'm just gonna take my money elsewhere," Melissa shouted, irritated. After her antics, the bouncer, with a very cordial attitude, lets us in.

We went through the usual routine before we were allowed into the party: the bag search, and the slight pad-down to see if we had any concealed weapons. Embarrassingly, it took a while for the person to search thoroughly through my bag since I had half my toiletries in there.

"Yes, I would like to check this bag and jacket in," Melissa states. Janet then told Melissa to wait, so she can grab her makeup from her bag.

"Why can't you buy pants that come with pockets? Or are you afraid that an extra layer of pocket is gonna make your ass any bigger than it is?" Melissa retorted.

Our initial move was to head for the bathroom. We had to make sure our makeup was in place, because we all knew that without our mask placed correctly, we could scare away the entire crowd; besides, I had to pee real badly.

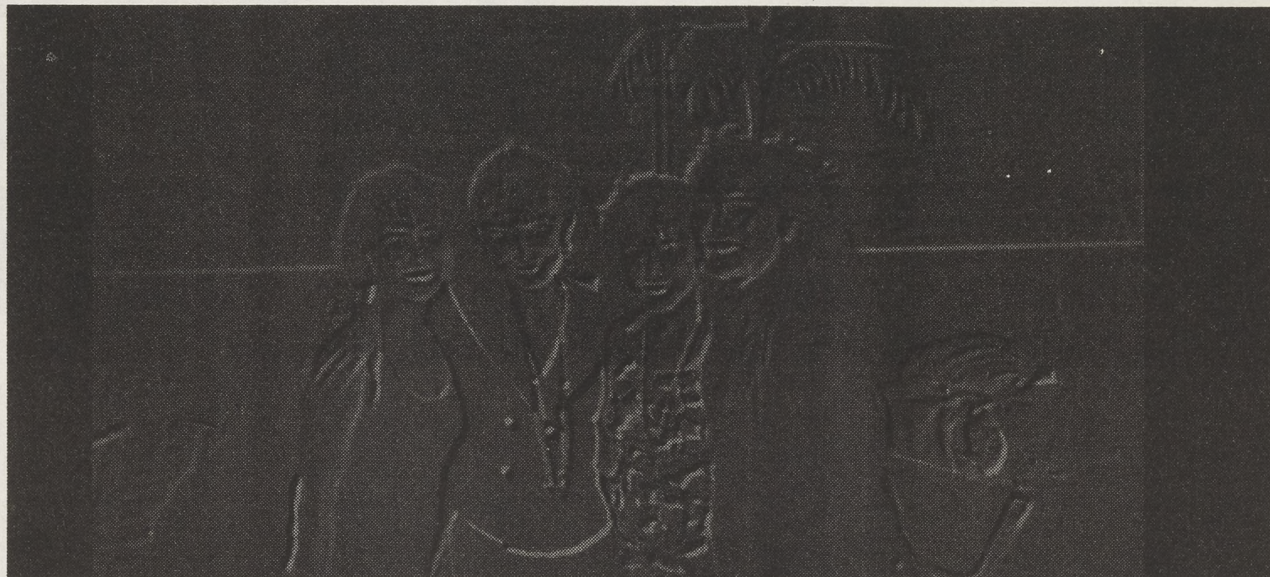
Pushing the door open, a whiff of cigarette smoke engulfed me. After doing our business, Mel and I tried to wash our hands, but almost did not accomplish the task. Girls were hovering over the sink mirror to reapply their makeup. Mel was using the sink next to Janet and purposely chose to shake her hands dry instead of using a towel.

"Hey, watch my face!" screamed Janet.

"So do it over again," snapped Melissa.

Some of these girls tried to look good by applying ten thousand layers on, but it wasn't going to work. They looked so ugly. Nothing will make it better, unless they put a bag over their heads.

We got on the dance floor to some house music, and began to dance in a circle, which was how wacked we were. Along the way there



were a couple of nasty looking guys who kept trying to break our circle. I felt like a piece of meat being checked out at the frozen food section. The guys around us were "talking big" in an attempt to impress us.

At one point, Melissa pushed some of them and yelled, "back off you fucks!" The funniest thing was that they simply could not dance for shit! They did not have any sense of rhythm at all. It was embarrassing to be seen near them. Hello guys, that's why some of us girls would not dance with you. And if any of them do, they are desperate.

Right then, some girl with a skin-tight bra-like top with white pants walks past Janet. Her thong was showing through the pants. As she walked by, she gave Janet a snotty look. That girl smirked to her friends. Janet whispered something nasty to Fanny.

"What the hell are you guys doing here?" I asked my brother's friends. Most of them were standing right outside of the girl's room. "What do you think," replied one of them. "Perverts!" said Melissa, "I suggest you guys give it up, because tonight's crowd ain't all that."

As Mel and Fanny came over, a guy almost vomited on Fanny. Not surprisingly, my brother's friends were still hanging around.

"You guys are gonna to end up in a fight if youze keep acting up like this," said Melissa, "and don't try to lay that thing on me, that ya just pretending to be waiting for your girls. You guys pull this crap so many times, but not once did any of you score. Low-lives like you probably jerk off watching 'Mating in the Animal Kingdom' on the Discovery Channel."

"Hey, watch your mouth, Mel!", one of them spouts off.

Pulling Mel with me, we headed toward the dance floor again. The last word we heard from the guys was something with PMS. For their info, girls don't need a reason or an excuse to act up.

Just then, Mike came up to me and asked what's going on.

Melissa interrupted. "Your guys are acting horny over there. Go and fetch your dogs and please put a leash on them. By the way they're salivating to much! Haven't you fed them Pedigree yet?"

No sooner had Mike left for the girl's room when a fight broke out. I saw Tommy, one of my brother's friends, being pinned to the wall. Mike and the rest of the guys rushed from the girl's room to the scene. Jumping in got them all kicked out of the place. Melissa said, "This party is wack! Let's go, Kate." "Sure, as soon as Janet comes out."

Just then Janet rushed toward us, huffing and puffing she asked: "Where's the fight! Where's the fight! Where's the fight!" We told her it over again. Pouting, she asked us why didn't we call her out to see it.

"And not let you powder yourself? Are you kidding? We would never dream of that!" snapped Melissa.

"Oh, that is so unfair!" whined Janet.

Just then a bunch of very attractive looking girls came out of the bathroom.

"Let's go, I want to check on my brother before he drives off in Gumby's Pinto."

Well, she's not the only one life is unfair to.

FEATURES

ANIME: Not just for Saturday mornings anymore

Elisa Paik

It's esoteric, erratic, and erotic. It may even be, uh, oh, exotic. With bizarre characters, fantastical sketches, and almost absolute departure from reality, anime has become America's most recent pop cultural indulgence.

Anime — Japanese animation — “is different, not something you'd normally see in the U.S.,” said fan Deborah Berner.

“They have a lot of things you can't even believe people think of. For example, *Ranma 1/2* is called that because the character switches between being a boy and a girl.”

Despite, or maybe because of its perceived weirdness, anime has moved in recent years from cult status to the mainstream. It depicts everything from bloody rapes, homoerotic sexual encounters and savage murders, to explosive representations of armageddon and world war.

These images did not, however, emerge from the depths of some artist's murky imagination; they are instead residues of a national history marked by violence. Through the ease of fantasy, anime provides an in-depth exploration of sexuality, the aftermath of World War II, and industrialization.

Ray Hsia is one of a few people to research the influences of contemporary American pop culture on Asian American culture, and has recently finished his senior thesis on the subject. “I really believe that anime is a legitimate form of storytelling,” he said.

“In some ways anime has closed itself off and been presented as action-adventure, but there have been some good stories about Hiroshima and the possibilities of nuclear war in movies like *Akira*.”

Akira, the 1989 movie often credited with launching the new anime explosion, deals with genetic engineering in postwar Neo Tokyo in the 21st century. The movie explores themes of evolution and the ramifications of secret government experimentation. It is precisely this sort of social commentary, combined with mind-boggling cartooniness, which make anime so popular with its more sophisticated audiences.

Berner said that while she enjoys the colorful escape that anime provides, she also views it more critically than other anime consumers

due to her background in anthropology. She said that “children watch cartoons and simply think, ‘Ooh, a cartoon!’ and don't look beyond it for meaning.”

But there is symbolism in anime. One series, *Grave of the Fireflies*, is a drama about children living through World War II in Japan. There is a lot of pro-Japanese/pro-western thinking in it, since Japan has been westernized since the '50s.”

Unlike Berner, most anime consumers do not realize the legacy upon which the movies draw,

anime expert based upon his racial background. “There is an assumption that we, as Asian Americans, grew up with anime,” he said. “With the surging popularity of anime, and because I visit Asia a lot, people expect that I know all about it.”

Although many grew up with television programs like *Speed Racer* and *Gigantor* (America's earliest anime imports), Asian Americans like Vicki Kan echo Hsia's sentiments about never having been anime fetishists at all. “I really don't know what anime is out there,” said Kan. “Honestly, I don't know much about it.”

But Berner does, and she thought it odd when visitors to her apartment assumed that her Chinese-American roommate owned the anime videos piled by the television set. “When a lot of people think about people who watch anime, they think of Asian people. People ask my roommate to borrow my tapes,” she said.

Asian and Asian-American cultural products are distinctly different; they are distinguishable by the sensibilities of the producers and by the audiences they reach. Selena Whang, who teaches the Asian American Popular Culture course at New York University, said that she does not address anime as a form of Asian-American pop art in her class.

“I don't really know of any well-known Asian-American anime artists that make specifically Asian-American ‘anime’ art, that is, art that targets and is for Asian-American audiences,” she said.

“I think part of the intention of Asian-American pop cultural producers is to start to delineate a space for Asian-American culture within the American mainstream cultural imagery, which is an extremely political act, considering the historical and political landscape of the U.S. and its racist social scriptings.”

Japanimation can similarly be construed to be a political act. Its reconfigurations of history and world wars and its projections for the future are powerful, said Hsia. “But it's done in an entertaining way.”

He adds, “so there are people who can say ‘Wow, that was a cool movie’, and others can say that social commentary is what a good movie is all about.”



© Rumiko Takahashi/ Viz Communications/ Shogakukan/ Kitty/ Fuji TV
Japanese animation isn't just *Robotron*. In *Ranma 1/2*, Ranma Saotome (left) has big trouble: he changes gender when he touches cold water, and his father sets up a marriage with martial artist Akane Tendo (right).

said Scott Mauriello. He co-owns the two-year-old Anime Crash boutique in the East Village and plans to capitalize further upon Asian pop culture with his new stores in Times Square, Boston, and Providence. He said that most people “see anime as cool action cuts. They don't understand the Asian element, but are learning slowly.”

The American anime audience began largely as “young males aged 16 through 34,” he said. “But it's now women, Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, and tourists from Europe and Latin America. Many American-born Chinese and Koreans buy it too, because their friends taped it and brought it back from Asia.”

Hsia said he is not an anime collector — just a fan — and that he is unfairly expected to be an

Caught in Between: Chinese Workers at NYU

Annie Cok

While attending the 7th Annual East of California Conference ("EoC") in November 1997, I discovered the struggle to incorporate Asian Pacific American studies into academia, and the ongoing economic struggle of a local group of Chinese construction workers and the community-based organizations who came to their aid.

Against Sweatshops (NMASS), Sigmund Shen, representing the NYU chapter of NMASS, Kwong Hui, of the Chinese Staff & Workers Association (CSWA) and last but not least, Wayne Wang, representing the Chinese Construction Workers' Association (CCWA).

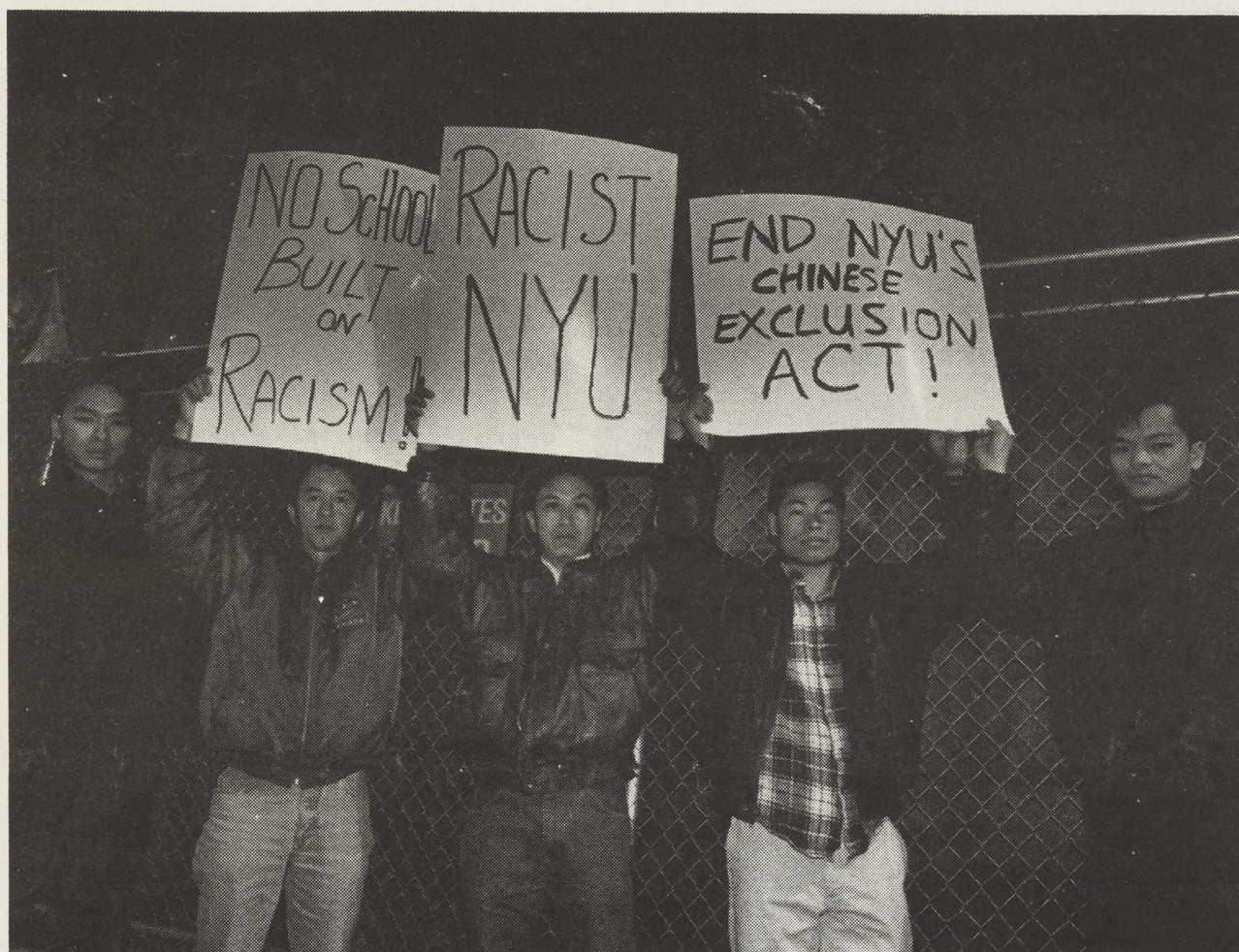
Earlier this year, NYU hired Plaza Construction to build a 20-story, 650-bed dor-

president Micheal Gabbay said that "he'd like to see Asians have 'more of a presence' at the site but given the tiny fraction of the unionized workforce that is Asian, 'that's not going to happen, because New York is a union city.'"

Hui has a different opinion; he said that the "historically segregated construction industry — including the unions — has integrated only after protests by labor activists." Based on the city report, unionized Asians account for less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the entire workforce.

According to Wang and Hui, when they met with the NYU administration to discuss equal job opportunity and union membership for their workers, they claimed they had "no power" over Plaza's closed-shop hiring policies.

For more than six months now, CSWA, students of NYU-Watch and various other organizations have been adamant about educating people about their fight against NYU and



CSWA protestors at the University Hall West site.

© Corky Lee

The plenary on the first night consisted of five panelists moderated by the director of Asian Pacific American Studies at NYU, Jack Tchen. Before any of the panelists were introduced, the following announcement was made: "...the 1997 EoC coordinating committee has decided to relocate this year's conference from an NYU venue to the New School [of Social Research] to show solidarity for the Chinese construction workers who have been excluded from work at an NYU dormitory site...the struggle of these Chinese workers are not solely for jobs but racial justice...The East of California Network will not hold its conference in an NYU institutional state so long as Chinese workers are excluded from that very state." Tracy Tang, an EoC coordinating committee member and NYU student also informed us that a special session addressing this issue has been arranged for the following morning.

The session entitled "NYU's Chinese Exclusion Act & How Asian Americans Can Fight Exclusion Today" began at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, consisting of four panel speakers: Heidi Chua, of the National Mobilization

mitory on East 14th Street and 3rd Avenue. According to Wang, a group of Chinese construction workers, including himself, went to the NYU construction site in search for work, but Plaza turned them away, claiming that they had to be in the union in order to be hired. Wang said they returned to Plaza every week to inquire about available jobs; despite their persistence, they were rejected each time. By July, Plaza had hired over 100 workers who already began to lay out the foundation of the dorm that will be called University Hall West once completely built, hopefully by 1998. During one visit to site, Wang was approached by a foreman who told him, "It's not your turn."

Kwong Hui of CSWA explained that the union would accept only hired workers as members. They could gain membership within seven days of being hired by a union company. However, the general contractor stood firmly behind their policy of hiring only unionized workers and thereby, placing the construction workers in a catch-22.

Upholding a closed shop policy, Plaza vice

Plaza Construction by protesting on campus, rallying for support and handing out flyers on city corners. Their struggles did, however, faced some opposition in some cases.

The organizations' public attack on the university and Plaza attracted much media attention; however, one wruter hardly disguised his prejudices when he wrote in the October 8-14 issue of *The New York Press*, portraying the Asian construction workers and their supporters as stereotypes by describing them as "penniless Chinese hard-hats" and "crafty protesters."

Despite this attack, the workers' organizations still had the strong support of the Asian American community. Three weeks before the conference, the EoC coordinating committee directly rebuffed NYU, moving the event to the New School of Social Research. The boycott was spoken about openly at the EoC conference, and many of the professors, students and other attendees gave their support for the construction workers. The organizers helping the construction workers believed the main reason for not giving these men work is because of racist hiring practices. According to the organizers, NYU officials claimed that NYU was not responsible for Plaza's actions because the university has no control over the way the contractors hired their employees.

Continued on next page

IN THE

In the words of one student protester, Telly Wong, "So basically, they're [NYU] just passing the buck." A student whom I interviewed at the EoC conference said that although the university is not directly responsible, they are in a position to take a stronger stance.

"The school is not trying to make it a racial issue; this is about money and capitalism," said Steven Chang. "With NYU, they have a sense of deniability, they don't think that it's their problem. [NYU believes that] it's the subcontractor's problem and with this deniability they are protected."

Hui believes that it is NYU's responsibility to be aware if there's any racism occurring on its sites and should be responsible for the fair hiring of workers. "We want numbers, and some kind of percentage of people from our community being hired," he said.

The university and the contractors denied all

COMMUNITY

allegations of discrimination at the East 14th construction site. According to NYU spokesperson, John Beckman, the administrators have held several meetings with the representatives of the student-worker coalition and also with the contractor to determine what course of action should be taken.

He went on to say that Plaza asked the group to submit a list of names of people who were qualified union members and what their skills were. Beckman claimed that four out of the people on the submitted list were not union members; one person was in the union and the other had another job and were not interested in working on the NYU dorm site. Whether or not Plaza eventually hired those non-union workers is unknown, but according to Beckman, he insists that NYU "is very sensitive" to the issue of discrimination—pointing out that the school boasted a 30 percent Asian American student body and some 50 percent are people of color." But Hui counters, "If NYU truly respected the huge number of minority students that they have there, then they should have done the right thing from the beginning, and they haven't."

After the session, I went with members of CSWA on November 15, to see the NYU construction site on 14th Street. I had the opportunity to interview a young construction worker, Victor Jiang, who told me he recently

became a union member. According to Jiang, he had joined Project Headway a few years ago, an organization founded in 1989 to help minority workers (Blacks, Latinos, Asians, etc.) gain union membership. After a frustrating three-year struggle, Jiang was still not in the union. Earlier this year, in February, he contacted the CSWA and told them his situation. With the help of CSWA volunteers, Jiang was able to become a member of the iron worker's union, Local 40 within a month.

Jiang is happy to finally get into the union because now he is entitled to significantly higher wage, health benefits, worker's compensation, paid vacations, and a pension. When I asked Jiang about his opinion of NYU's role in the feud, he replied that since NYU will be the owner of the building (University Hall West) and they [are the ones who] make the decision of which general contractor gets to build the dorm, NYU has "the power to tell them (Plaza) what kind of people they should hire."

Hui believes that NYU has the authority to intervene and something to aid the construction workers trapped in the catch-

22. According to him, NYU is a powerful institution that has enough authority and influence to potentially work out a plan with Plaza Construction to hire non-union construction workers on the basis that they would have to apply for union membership immediately. As a result, the union could not turn hired workers away, because according to union policy, as long as they are hired by a company, they are qualified for membership.

However, NYU administrators have not made any moves toward taking such actions. Becoming a union member is the only way to gain better job opportunities, wages, and benefits, hoping to rise above the discrimination facing the minority and immigrant workforce in this country.

When I spoke with construction worker Victor Jiang, he told me that Chinese workers do not want to work only in their own community.

"We want to swim in the bigger ocean," Jiang said.

[Ed. Note: at press time, unconfirmed reports state that NYU has quietly hired about a half dozen Chinese workers at the 14th Street site.]

U.S. House Passes Permanent Resident Donations Ban

Daphne Kwok, Organization of Chinese Americans

On March 30, the U.S. House of Representatives approved 369 to 43, H.R. 34, the "Illegal Foreign Contributions Act", which was one of only two campaign finance reform bills to have passed. H.R. 34 denies foreign nationals from contributing to political campaigns.

Daphne Kwok, Executive Director of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) stated, "Last night, the U.S. House of Representatives took an unfortunate step of stereotyping and scapegoating legal immigrants as 'foreigners,' even though legal permanent residents are here to become citizens, pay taxes and many have given their lives for this country. Our country should welcome immigrants into the political process, rather than exclude them."

Matthew Finucane, Executive Director of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO, commented, "Immigrants are being put into a Catch-22; they are criticized by conservatives for not learning English and assimilating fast enough, while at the same time a mean-spirited and unconstitutional roadblock is created to keep them out of the political process."

Debashis Mishra, Executive Director of the India Abroad Center for Political Awareness said, "Last night's vote is comparable to the federal government's efforts at the turn of the century of preventing Asian immigrants from participating in the political process. Immigrants have become convenient scapegoats for America's social ills; it is no wonder politicians want to deny them a voice in our democracy."

"We commend the members who spoke firmly about the rights of LPRs. The APA community now knows that Representatives Patsy Mink, Eni Faleomavaega, Danny Davis, Steny Hoyer, Sam Gejdenson and others are the only people in the House who understand and are protecting the rights of LPRs," stated John Melegrito, Executive Director of the National Association of Filipino Americans.

"Our campaign finance reform nightmare came true last night—that one of the only provisions of the reform bill to pass would be the ban on LPRs and political contributors. This First Amendment rights of LPRs has been obliterated with no real concern by the 369 members of Congress who voted in favor of H.R. 34," stated Bob Sakaniwa, Washington, D.C. Representative for the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). "Rather than pass meaningful campaign reform, Congress is putting a 'no immigrants allowed' sign on every political party office in the country."

Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film & Video Festival

Penney Wei

Celebrating over 15 years of showcasing the finest in Asian and Asian American cinema, the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film & Video Festival will be held from May 14 through May 21, 1998 at the Directors Guild of America and Japan America Theatre.

Presented by Visual Communications, the nation's premier Asian Pacific media arts center, this year's Festival will feature nearly 70 film and video works by Asian producers throughout the world, as well as works by independent Asian American filmmakers.

"The Festival continues to showcase the vitality and growth of Asian Pacific cinema," said Abraham Ferrer, festival co-director. "This year's Festival recognizes the 30th Anniversaries of both the UCLA Ethnocommunications Program and Third World Newsreel - highlighting the growing achievements of our community of cinema artists."

Notes David Magdael, who joins the Festival this year as co-director, "We're not only excited by the tremendous support for the Festival by audiences and sponsors, but also that Visual Communications moves into a new home at the Union Center for the Arts just in time for the Festival.

"These developments signal an increased vitality and enthusiasm for what VC and, most importantly, our community's cinema artists are doing to move our stories into the larger mainstream arena."

The Festival kicks off on Thursday, May 14, with a star-studded gala at the Director's Guild of America, featuring the exclusive screening of *hundred percent*, an I Can Make It Myself Production, written and directed by Eric Koyanagi. Featuring a cast starring Tamlyn Tomita, Garrett Wang, Lindsay Price, and Dustin Nguyen, *hundred percent* is an offbeat portrait of Venice Beach, California as seen through the eyes of three Asian males. Opening night attendees include the cast and director of the film along with a host of Asian American celebrities.

The Festival ends on Thursday, May 21 at the Japan America Theatre in Los Angeles, Little Tokyo, including the local premier of a new Asian international feature; and the presentation of the first annual King Hu Award, in sponsorship with the International Channel in recognition of the career of the legendary Hong Kong action director.

Highlights by Asian American artists slated for the Festival include the Los Angeles premieres of *Kelly Loves Tony*, by Spencer Nakasako, co-director of the award-winning *AKA Don Bonus*; New York-based Francisco Aliwalas' *Disoriented*, a comedy that follows the travails of a hen-pecked Filipino American, West Cordova, as he negotiates his last year of pre-med studies; Camera Obscura's *Virtue*, a cybersexual black comedy; and NY native Lana Lin's *Almost a Cocktail Hour*, an imagined memoir of the life of lesbian writer Jane Bowles. Also included are Tim Chey's *Fakin' da Funk*, a comedy about an adopted Chinese American youth into a black family; and Ann Kaneko's *Overstay*, a documentary portrait of overseas contract workers in Japan.

In recognition of the Philippine Centennial this year, the Festival will present two award-winning productions: Tikoy Aguiluz' *Rizal in Dapitan*, about the Filipino national hero's years in internal exile; and Marilou Diaz-Abaya's *Milagros*, a steamy epic of love and relationships that was the Philippines' 1997 Academy Award winning entry for Best Foreign Language Film. Other works by Asian international directors confirmed at presstime include Taiwanese director Lin Cheng-sheng's *Murmur of Youth*, about two young women who find com-

panionship with each other; Park Ki-Yong's *Motel Cactus*, which is set in a love motel in Seoul; and Japanese *enfant terrible* Shinobu Yaguchi's screwball comedy, *My Secret Cache*.

Among the many exceptional short films and videos included in the Festival program are a strong set of works by Vietnamese and Southeast Asian Artists including *I Am Viet Hung*, *Vietnamese Hero* by Diep Bui, *First Daughter* by Anne Madden, and *Sunshine* by Min Duc Nguyen; Korean American artists including Dexter Kim (*Prodigal Son*), Richard Kim (*Kung Pao Chicken*), K. Hee Oh (*Songbird*), and Greg Pak (*Mouse*); and the return of past Festival artists Mark Arbitrario, Ming-Yuen S. Ma, Celine Salazar-Parrenas, Oliver Tan; as well as the newly slated 'up-and-coming' wave of Gen-X filmmakers, Justin Lin (*Shopping for Fangs*), Rea Tajiri (*Strawberry Fields*), Chris Chan Lee (*Yellow*), Eric Nakamura, and Michael Idemoto, who all collaborated in a five-part video anthology entitled *Obits*.

A special program at the Japan America Theatre on Monday, May 18 will pay tribute to the late Japanese screen icon Toshiro Mifune. The program will include a screening of one of Mifune's signature works in collaboration with famed director Akira Kurosawa, as well as personal tributes by guest hosts.

The second edition of the Asian American Independent Feature Workshop will be held at Visual Communications' new home at the Union Center for the Arts on Saturday, May 16 and Sunday, May 17. The event is presented by Visual Communications and sponsored by the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) and Bravo/The Independent Film Channel. Inaugurated in 1997, the Workshop will provide a select group of emerging Asian Pacific American Filmmakers an opportunity to meet with industry professionals, distributors, and producers to help the artists get their works on the silver screen.

The Festival, in association with the Director's Guild of America, will present a lively panel discussion, "Hong Kong in Hollywood: Facing/Off for a Better Tomorrow" on Sunday, May 17 at the DGA. The panel will consider the rising impact of major Hong Kong filmmakers and stars such as John Woo, Stanley Tong, Ringo Lam, Tsui Hark, Jackie Chan, Chow Yun Fat, Michelle Yeoh, and Jet Li in mainstream Hollywood action films and comedies; and will raise many provocative questions about the impact of this trend on mainstream Hollywood pictures and the Hong Kong native film industry.

The Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film and Video Festival was first established in 1983 by Visual Communications as a vehicle to promote Asian and Asian Pacific American cinema. This year's Festival Sponsors include the Los Angeles Mayor's Asian American Heritage Month Committee, The City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, Directors Guild of America, Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, Coors Brewing Company, Crown Royal, Hitachi, NAATA, Los Angeles, Times, Bravo/Independent Film Channel, International Channel Network, Asahi Bank, and Sony Pictures Entertainment.

The Directors Guild of America is located at 7920 Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood; the Japan America Theatre is located at 244 S. San Pedro St. in Los Angeles Little Tokyo. Tickets for the Opening Night program at the DGA on May 14 are \$50 (Screening & Gala Reception) and \$100 (Mayor's VIP Screening & Gala Reception) and will benefit Visual Communications' educational and access programs at the Union Center for the Arts. Tickets for Festival programs, May 15 through 21, are \$8.00 General; \$5.00 students & seniors, and Friends of Visual Communications and JACCC members with I.D. For ticket and program information for all Festival events, please call Visual Communications at (213) 680-4462, email: viscom@vc.apanet.org, or visit the Festival website at <http://vc.apanet.org/~viscom/>. See you

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A Bulletin in the Head

Telly Wong

Dissatisfied with the apologies *The San Francisco Chronicle* had given for its Feb. 28th article, which allegedly links Chow Yun Fat with the Hong Kong triads, Chow and his lawyers have sent the paper a final notice to retract its article and apologize fully, or else serious legal action will be taken. Meanwhile, Chow is hard at work on his latest flick, *The Corrupter*, with Marky Mark and the Funky Bun...oops, I mean just Mark Wahlberg.

John Woo has good vibrations these days. He has just finished the Dolph Lundgren starrer *Black Jack for USA*, and has signed on to direct Tom Cruise in *Devil Soldier*. The movie is based on a true story about a 19th Century adventurer who falls in love with a Chinese girl. It is rumored that Cruise wants to get Gong Li for the role. Obviously, he hasn't seen *Chinese Box* yet.

While John Woo is enjoying his success in Hollywood working with A-List actors, other Hong Kong directors haven't been so lucky. As a follow up to his kickboxing kangaroo box office flop, *Warriors of Virtue*, Ronny Yu will be directing the latest installment in the *Child's Play* series, *Bride of Chucky*, for Universal Studios. No, I'm serious. I guess this is the price you pay if you don't want to work with Van Damme.

Would you believe Steven Seagal as Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan? Well, Seagal and his production company are betting 40 million dollars that you will. The film commences production this Fall. This will be the first Hollywood film to depict Khan since the ultra-ubiquitous Al Leong (yes, that's his name) hilariously lampooned him in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*.

No, Joan Chen hasn't disappeared off the face of the earth — just from the front of the camera. She makes her directorial debut with *Xiu Xiu: the Sent-Down Girl*, which she shot illegally in Mainland China. It is a tale of innocence lost during the Cultural Revolution. The film makes its premiere at the prestigious Berlin Film Festival. Way to go Joan! — now just stay away from those Rutger Hauer movies.

Bruce Lee's daughter, Shannon Lee, is continuing the Lee family legacy. She has signed a multi-picture deal with Hong Kong's largest motion picture studio, Golden Harvest — the same one that made her father a star. Lee has already completed her first film, *And Now You're Dead*. The film will be released on July 20th in Hong Kong to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Dragon's death. Michael Wong (Russell's brother) co-stars, along with HK superstars Anita Yuen (*He's a Woman, She's a Man*) and Jordan Chan (*Young and Dangerous*).

For you deprived souls who don't know who Jordan Chan is yet, you'll get your first taste of the versatile actor/singer this fall in Jackie Chan's *Rush Hour*, his first American starring vehicle in over a decade. And while we're on the topic of Jackie: if you happen to catch Disney's *Mulan* in China this summer, you will be hearing the Chan-man's voice, as he is among the cast for the Chinese dub.

Lastly, the Chinese government has banned *Tomorrow Never Dies* in China. According to reports, the decision came because censors felt that Michelle Yeoh's character, a Chinese secret agent posing as a reporter, was unrealistic. In the meantime, Chinese government officials are very eager to know where they can buy one of those cellular phone controlled BMWs.

UNDERCOVER

MORNING REFLECTION

Wayne E. Yang

The actor is a fiery child,
profile of a firestarter—
Yellows like phlegm,
Reds like blood that has dried
and left scabs.
The Blues are hot,
heat that is cold and burns
at the touch.

The face melts into a background
of bloody tiles
and asbestos squares.

Dripping and hot, eyes
stare in burned-out glaze,
entrails strewn across a canvas.

RHINO

Wayne E. Yang

Folds of skin
cling to his body, like a candle's
firm, soft tallow.
His horn protrudes
from between his eyes,
a toothpick
through his nose.
The grayness is of watercolor,
and watered-down ink,
a fading grayness
in the habitat of a darkened asylum.

His lonely frame looks bony,
but huge,
out of place
among the bars and barriers.

Wayne E. Yang studied writing at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Journalism at the University of South Carolina. His college writing won awards from the Hearst Foundation and the Rolling Stone College Writing Competition. Wayne also studied literature at Cornell University.

Mind Boggler

[13 stripes on the American flag]
[32 degrees Fahrenheit at which water freezes]
[18 holes on a golf course]
[90 degrees in a right angle]
[200 dollars for passing go in Monopoly]
[8 sides on a stop sign]
[3 Blind Mice, See How They Run]
[4 quarts in a gallon]
[24 hours in a day]

Chinese Herbs Arrive in Allendale SC, Population 5000

Síofra Shaman Skye

Afternoon tea has changed,
invaded by the inscrutable;
Juniper Berries exchanged
for Dragon Eyes.
And what she christens,
crinkle-eyed, her "witch's brew"
of fruit and twig and root
lives on the flame.

She sets the table just the same
but with China capitalized,
imagining the flowing robes;
the curve of fingernails;
the tiny feet.
The licorice is sweet.
She pronounces the name:
Gan T'sao.
The sugar and the cream
unheeded now.

Her son (the priest) remarks
on this in New York during
Coffee Hour, his demeanor
somewhat dour, attitude amazed.
He tugs a collar approaching
the Mandarin and offers me
a condescending smile.

I tell him that I use them too:
Long Yen Rou.

The Art of Letter-Writing

Priscilla Chan

I love mail. And not the e- kind.

Personality, people. That's what
the Letter is all about. Please don't
let the Art die. Why not? Read on
....

Here's my logic: receiving a per-
sonal letter in the mail gives a very
good feeling, no? Good feelings
makes Person go about in good
spirits. Person in good spirits treats
other people with great friendli-
ness. Friendliness makes a better
world

O.K., 180 degrees turn-around
now. No personal letters ever

arrive in the mail. Person is always
in bad spirits. Bad spirits force
Person to be foul to other people.
These other people treat other
people rudely, a chain reaction
starts ã bada-bing, bada-boom! :
Armageddon.

Just kidding, of course, but you get
where I'm going with this, right?
Letters are our friends. They make
our world a better place. So why
aren't there more of them in the
world? I don't know. That's up to
me and you. Well, more you (if
you don't already write letters)
than me.

Continued on next page

A METAMORPHOSIS

Penney Wei

Please, help me get through this pain inside;
A pain that aches, and tears, and tugs, and inundates me
With a fear that I shall never survive this moment in my life.
Please help me.

In fear, I have called out to you.
In pain, I have begged for your mercy.
In desperation, I have yearned ... yearned for your embrace.
The very thought of your warm, electric touch lifts me out of my misery.

I miss all of you — your love, your spirit, and your guidance.
I miss the very essence of your presence in a room ... and the sweetness that lingers.
I miss the inner strength that only you could provide,
For I fear I have none to aid me in my wake.
So as each day passes by silently, I know I am killing myself
With the blackness of my loneliness, my guilt, and my pain.

Yet, do I seem well to others on the surface?
Of course! But it is only a facade.
To them I seem healthy, happy, and satisfied, and
Seem to live this perfect life.
Hah! And what if they knew the truth?

They do not know of the drama I face each day —
Of how I must fight against this spineless fear and torment
Which haunts me like my Shadow, teasingly lurking behind me,
Never to leave my sight.
They do not know of how strong I really am inside,
That I could defeat an army of demons if need be, and
Then lick them clean of all the ugliness they possess.

My life is a cataclysm of different moments;
Each one stacked upon the other like a towering skyscraper....
In the middle of nowhere.
I guess I felt nowhere thenäbut I know I am somewhere now.
I have finally come HOME.

You have carried me away from my demons.
You have helped me face my Shadow.
You have freed me from my prisons, and
Have guided me willfully on my Path; until at last,
I found my own inner strength to carry on in this existence.

But that does not mean I will ever forget you;
For I know that You and I are always One, and
The sacred love we deeply hold will live on forever.

So now, do I seem healthy, and joy-full, and
Richly filled with the Energy and Light of your Being?
Yes ... I finally do.

Each day I feel the wholeness and spirit of your love.
Each day I experience it with every inspiring moment, and
I know the wisdom that I draw from this experience
Will be something I can share in the future with others.

You are my eternal soulmate, and I vow to live an earnest life;
That I may help to alleviate the pain of those,
Who are now living the suffering I have already undergone.

Please, give them the strength of the love You have gifted me...
For only then shall they be FREE.



Penney Wei is an active actor/writer based in Los Angeles. Because of this poem, which prompted her on a wondrous spiritual path, she is currently pursuing a PhD in metaphysical counseling.

The Art of Letter-Writing

Continued from previous page

My name is Priscilla Chan and I'm a Letter-Writer.

Sure, sure, you're thinking why is a plea for Letter Writers in the ASIAM Literary Section? Well, here's some more of that logic:

What's literature? Writing.

What's writing? Words on a piece of paper.

What's a letter?

Ding-ding-ding! You are correct, sir!

Letter writing is a good thing. It's also quite easy to do. And fun as well. Shall we?

This is the 7-step method. Alter or expand to your desired skill level.

First, start with a writing utensil. A regular old pen, or a color pencil, or a thin-point marker will do.

Next, find the right stationery. You could go with the store-bought kind, or you can take a plain white piece of paper and place a sticker at the top to add some pizzazz! Or you could make a little snowflake border with scissors. Or sprinkle a little glitter around the sides.

Third, think of someone to write to. Your buddy, your Senator, your parents, Santa Claus, ASIAM: it's all good.

Fourth, proceed to write. For those of you stuck on this step, might I offer these suggestions: Free flow with your thoughts. Write everything that comes to mind down. Describe something you want to go to (gallery, movie, restaurant, etc.) Only write down questions. Be inquisitive.

Detail your day. There's no minimum or maximum length. Stop when you're out of things to say.

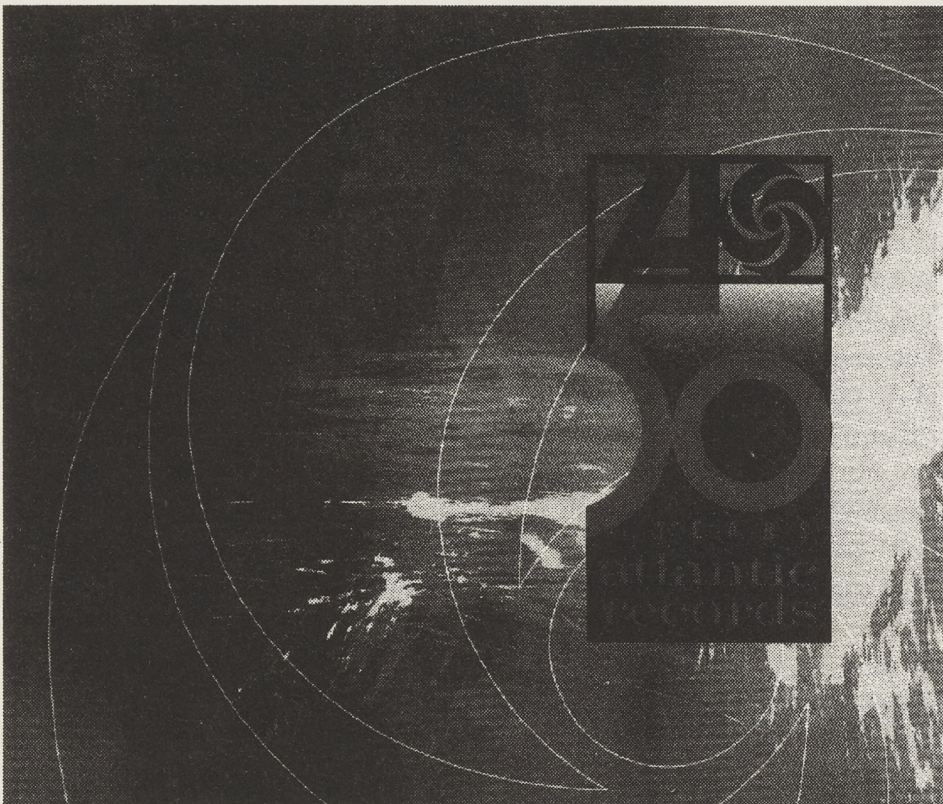
Fifth, find an envelope. Or make one. Take a nice piece of paper or rip one from a magazine; anything will do. Fold it twice. Tape the sides. And there you go! One envelope to go. (Note: on really funky paper, use sticker labels to write addresses.)

Sixth, locate a stamp. 32 cents is all. Stick it on top. One more step.

Lastly, walk around your neighborhood and find one of those beautiful blue mailboxes. Pull the handle and insert the letter.

You've just made somebody's day.

We're serious: we really want to hear from you. Write to ASIAM, 1275 First Avenue #204, New York, NY 10021.



ATLANTIC RECORDS 50 YEARS: THE GOLD ANNIVERSARY RECORD (Atlantic Records)

Atlantic Records started out as a boutique R&B label that later became home to The Drifters, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, and Ray Charles. Classics like Charles' rollicking piano boogie "What'd I Say," Percy Sledge's heart tugging "When A Man Loves A Woman," and Franklin's saucy "Respect" are on the first part of this double disc celebration. "Sock it to me, sock it to me!"

From the late 60's and all through the 70's, Atlantic became a hard rock power hitter. Signing Led Zeppelin, Cream, and The Rolling Stones to the label. They are represented by "Whole Lotta Love," "Sunshine Of Your Love," and "Brown Sugar." Derek and The Dominoes, Eric Clapton's guise after the break up of Cream, sizzles here with the original recording of "Layla," forever his signature tune.

The Disco Era is represented here by Chic's "Le Freak" and Sister Sledge's "We Are Family," a song that became the anthem of the late 70's World Series champs, The Pittsburgh Pirates. Both were written and produced by Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards, who later collaborated with countless superstars on countless hits.

From the 80's came Phil Collins' "In The Air Tonight," Foreigner's power ballad, "I Want To Know What Love Is," and Stevie Nicks' duet with Tom Petty, "Stop Dragging My Heart Around," all solid inclusions to this set. Tracks by Brandy, Hootie and the Blowfish, Tori Amos, and Jewel, represent their current roster.

This is a great collection of some of the best songs ever recorded. This set is an admirable attempt to represent the essence of this great record company; however, there are just too many songs missing, like the ones mentioned in the CD booklet. There are

approximately thirty-six minutes of unused space that could have been utilized to include tracks by Ruth Brown, Laverne Baker, ABBA, The Bee Gees or the many other artists from their rich and colorful history. Although this was a serious goof by the producers, that in itself shouldn't detract from enjoying the treasures here

- RJ Araneta



MOTOWN 40 FOREVER (Motown Records)

In celebration of their 40th Anniversary, Motown Records digitally remastered forty classic songs in this wonderful collection, from 60's classics like The Supremes "Stop In The Name Of Love" to today's casually paced hip hop Puff Daddy remix of Jackson 5's "I Want You Back."

The longing puppy love classic "Please Mr. Postman" by the Marvelettes, Mary Well's sugary sweet pop ballad "My Guy," and the steamy "Heatwave" from Martha & The Vandellas form a triple threat of passionate songs that escalates from innocent love to pure lust.

Oft-sampled powerhouse funk classics from Stevie Wonder's "Superstition," The Dazz Band's "Let It Whip," and "Superfreak" from Rick James get you into a booty shakin' kinda groove.

Diana Ross' silky smooth "When You Tell Me You Love Me" is unfamiliar, but an excellent inclusion to this package. She also appears here with The Supremes on "Stop In The Name Of Love," and on their final single together, the sassy, "Someday We'll Be Together."

There are minor complaints, like why certain classics were not included. I guess it was a tough choice. There's only so much room in a double-disk set. But there's no excuse for including Rockwell's paranoid new wave schlock, "Somebody's Watching Me." Being Berry Gody's son, hitting the Top Ten, and having Michael Jackson on backup still doesn't justi-

fy its inclusion. That aside, this collection is, to paraphrase Mary Well's song, "as a matter of opinion I think this is tops / my opinion is it's the cream of Motown's crop."

Yeah, that may be corny, but this album is one to get.

- RJ Araneta

THE BEACH BOYS PETSOUNDS SESSIONS (Capitol/E-Prop)

This four disc box set celebrates the genius of The Beach Boy's chief musical architect, Brian Wilson. The original Pet Sounds album is still hailed by critics and fans like Elton John, R.E.M., and Oasis as one of the greatest albums ever made.

Pop classics like "Wouldn't It Be Nice," "God Only Knows," "Sloop John B," and Wilson's debut solo single, the wistful "Caroline, No" are here in various stages of completion. This is a wonderful look into Wilson's creative process. A cappella versions of "Wouldn't It Be Nice," and his autobiographical "I Just Wasn't Made For These Times" shows just how tight The Beach Boys vocal harmonies were. Other cuts include instrumental only versions of "Caroline, No," and the groups eponymous single, "Good Vibrations." Karaoke anyone?

Wilson's creative genius is clearly evident in this set. What is amazing is that he's partially deaf in one ear and completely in the other.

The original album is here complete. It comes in two versions, mono, and for the first time ever on CD in stereo. This is a fantastic addition to any collection.

- RJ Araneta

[Beach Boys vocalist and guitarist Carl Wilson passed away in February after a yearlong bout with cancer. He sang lead on the classic tracks "Good Vibrations" and "Wouldn't It Be Nice," among others. Carl assumed the leadership role and kept the band together after his brother Brian quit performing live with the group. Ed]

DHAMA SUNA TIBETAN INSTITUTE OF PERFORMING ARTS (Detour)

Quite honestly, I really wanted to like this CD. I could hardly contain my excitement when ASIAM asked me to review *Dhama Suna*, from the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts. Ethnic music usually intrigues me — and from Tibet, home of the Dali Lama! I envisioned deep, thought producing music to meditate to, a tool to regain personal harmony after a stressful day at work.

The day after I received the CD, I was at work and it seemed that every freak in New York decided to call my office to complain. After the onslaught, I slammed down my phone feeling like I needed a cigarette — but what would I do with one since I've never smoked?

Regardless, I searched my bag for comfort in a stick of chewing gum and found *Dhama Suna*. (Dali Lama, take me away!) I popped the CD into my computer and sat back...first, I heard a man wailing. It was comforting. Then, high pitched female voices like happy alley cats—
meeeeeeeooooowowowow!!! Then the male voices singing the same tune. I kept an open mind. Then, the office accountant came into my office and pulled a chair up to my desk. At the same time, the third song started playing.
It first sounded like the rattling of garbage cans then a loud, guttural, "BBBMMM-
MOOOOOOOAAAAA- AWW-
WOOOOHHHH"

"What was that?" the accountant asked.
"Nothing," I said. Then, it happened again.
"It's this new CD a friend gave to me."
"Sounds like dinosaur," he told me. I clicked it off.

When I got home, I set myself into a meditative frame of mind, which I probably should have done in the first place, and turned it on. All was well until Track 4.

The Gyuto Monks' "Ya Mantaka" sounded like a slow decent into hell: thousands of baritones uttering unrecognizable words in the lowest note reachable by mankind. Wind moaned. Clanking of a violent sounding triangle. More netherworld chanting. Very Silence of the Lambs: man-dancing-around-with-a-coat-of-human-flesh.

There was just no redemption after that. Couldn't listen to it at home, couldn't listen to it at work. It's too distracting for background music, too disturbing for meditation, but too interesting to dislike completely. Like a lava lamp with neon lights, the perverse side had to have it, while the rational screamed, "turn it off!!"

A friend of mine wants a copy of it. He hasn't heard it yet. He wants to use it for his Tai Chi class. I don't think you can use it for Tai Chi, either.

Recommended to true lovers of Tibetan culture, for esoteric tastes only.

- B. Mariano

LED ZEPPELIN BBC SESSIONS (Atlantic)

Ever since I was just a short little munchkin, I was playing some truly amazing 'air guitar' riffs to Led Zep's "Rock and Roll" whenever it played on the radio. Now, every time I check out guitars at Sam Ash's, it never fails that I'm subjected to listen to some Jimmy Page wannabe showing off his chops by butchering "Stairway to Heaven." No wonder Robert Plant refuses to sing that song in concert these days.



Courtesy of Detour Records

My first Led Zeppelin purchase was the *Remasters* box set about six years ago. Listening to it was a mind-blowing experience. This was a collection of their best songs: from slow and heavy percolating blues that brews to balls to the wall cock rock posturing, to hippie dippy ballads, and Viking-like screams for Valhalla. They were the epitome of heavy metal bands, driven by the thunderous manic pounding of John Bonham's drums and Page's blistering slash and burn riffs, all kept from blowing in their face by John Paul Jones' steady bass rhythms. How amazing they must have been in concert.

You can imagine how excited I was when the BBC Sessions album was released a couple of months ago. This is a double disc of Led Zeppelin live. Collected from their British radio performances, I expected to hear the band unleashed, with all their raw power intact. However, my built-up anticipation had quickly dissipated. These 'live performances' were for the most part devoid of any life. Their attitude of perfectly capturing what they made in the studio came across as sanitized and limp. This was disc one.

The second disc was a bit better, but not by much though. This time, they performed in front of an audience at the Paris Cinema. Previewed in their set were songs from their untitled fourth album, released several months after this show. Among them were a

hesitant performance of "Stairway To Heaven," and an over-the-top medley of old blues and rock 'n' roll standards - "That's Alright Mama," "A Mess Of Blues," and "Honey Bee," and others woven within the framework of "Whole Lotta Love." Now that was cool.

The annoying thing on this disc was the audience applause. They were too damned polite and short with it, as if they were cued when to clap and when to stop. If not, then it sounds like an artificial applause track that was tacked on a few seconds before each song starts and ends. This was just too contrived, too neat, too clean. This ain't rock 'n' roll.

The BBC Sessions tracks give no clue as to why Led Zeppelin's music was called "The Hammer Of The Gods." For me, their best performances were captured on all those old albums, thankfully re-mastered digitally on CD's by Jimmy Page himself. "Led Zeppelin I," "II," the untitled fourth album, "Physical Graffiti," and their final album, "In Through The Outdoor" are highly recommended. Newcomers should get the *Remasters* box set, which is an excellent overview of the band's recording career and a fantastic starting point.

- CO Jones

VARIOUS ARTISTS LEGACY—A TRIBUTE TO FLEETWOOD MAC'S RUMOURS (Lava/Atlantic)

I've always been a sucker for cool songs with a good beat: this album has tons of it.

Fleetwood Mac, a "giant" in the history of music, hit Number 1 on the album charts in 1997 with their reunion album, *The Dance*.

On the 20th anniversary of the release of their classic album *Rumours*, various artists have recorded a tribute album, *Legacy*. All the songs were performed without insulting F.M., retaining their spirit and yet at the same time interpreted by each artist with their own unique, personal style.

The list of artists is unbeatable. Dolores O'Riordan's (The Cranberries) one of a kind vocal talent gives "Go Your Own Way" a new sound, although the arrangements remain close to the original. The Corrs' "Dreams" sounds a bit different from the original because of its awesome folk music intro. Elton John's version of "Don't Stop" sounds like one of his own originals. Jewel's soulful voice transforms the mood of "You Made Loving Fun" to a different level. The rest of the pack includes covers by Matchbox20, Tonic, Duncan Sheik, Shawn Colvin, Goo Goo Dolls, Tallulah and Sister Hazel.

It doesn't mean you'd have to retire *Rumours*. Take a listen to *Legacy*; I'm sure you'll like Fleetwood Mac's music with a new twist.

- Hope Chan

“There must be an unwritten law somewhere which states that every great Hong Kong director's first American film has to blow.”



Courtesy Tristar Pictures/Karen Chu

China Chow plays a Japanese kidnap victim with an attitude.

THE BIG HIT *Telly Wong*

At first, I thought it was the Van Damme Curse, but then I was subjected to Ronnie Yu's Van Damme-less *Warriors of Virtue* and Stanley Tong's achingly unfunny Leslie Nielsen vehicle, *Mr. Magoo*. Kirk Wong (*Crime Story*, *Organized Crime* and *Triad Bureau*), the latest HK *auteur* to get a green card, keeps the tradition alive and well with his first US picture, *The Big Hit*. Mark Wahlberg stars as Mel, a world-weary hitman who leads a band of foul-mouthed assassins (Lou Diamond Phillips, Antonio Sabato Jr. and Bokeem Woodbine) who look more like out-of-work GQ models than hired killers. In need of money and a plot device, the bunch soon kidnap a Japanese millionaire's bratty daughter (China Chow) to hold for ransom. But as fate would have it, the girl also happens to be the goddaughter of the guys' boss (played with deep voiced menace by Star Trek's *Deep Space Nine*'s Avery Brooks).

Seeing no other option, the blame is placed on Mel—who's keeping the girl bound and gagged in his suburban home—and a big chase ensues. Along the way, the flick plays like a bad episode of *Married...with Children*, as we see Mel struggling to cook a nice Kosher meal, trying to keep the neighbor's dog from opening a garbage bag filled with human remains and attempting to return his overdue copy of *King Kong Lives* to the local video store.

Obviously, the filmmakers were trying for the anything-goes feel of the Hong Kong action/comedy where the protagonist can be breakdancing in one scene and blowing someone's head off with a shotgun in the next. Unfortunately, this doesn't quite translate well in *The Big Hit*, largely due to the toilet paper script and the cast's stiff acting.

Wahlberg goes for a stoic Chow Yun Fat persona à la *The Killer* when he should have aimed for the more playful Chow à la *Once a Thief*. China Chow, making her film debut, gives an unimpressive one note performance as the hypersensitive poor little rich Japanese girl who inexplicably falls in love with Mel. Phillips, on the other hand, has fun with the material and chews up scenery as the hyperactive Cisco, and shows everyone he can do more than lip synch "La Bamba".

Filled with senseless violence, racial stereotypes and enough masturbation jokes to fill three junior high school locker rooms, *The Big Hit* is unabashed juvenile silliness on parade, tailored for those who talk back to the TV during episodes of *Jerry Springer*.

SOUND and VISION

SHOPPING FOR FANGS

Penney Wei

With a shoe-string budget and a burgeoning cinematic vision, filmmakers Quentin Lee and Justin Lin have taken *Shopping for Fangs* through an endless struggle of financial and artistic risks, to rise in the end to critical acclaim as a one-of-a-kind Asian American film. The movie toys with multiple genres and popular cinematic icons, and shatters the misconceptions of Asian Americans world-wide.

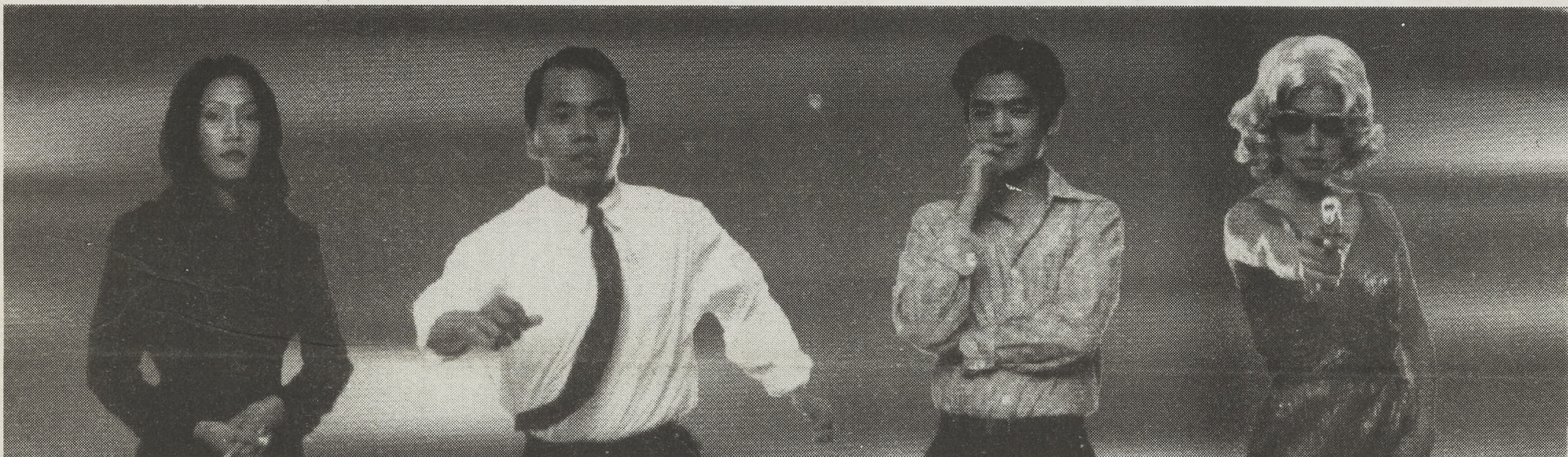
"*Shopping for Fangs* offers a veritable feast. Part-B movie, horror flick, action-thriller and melodrama, this film has something for everybody," quotes the Toronto International Film Festival in its 1997 citation as an official selection. It does by far.

Set in Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley, *Shopping for Fangs* is a hip and vibrant, yet darkly comic look at alienated Asian Gen-X'ers trapped in a world of mistaken identities, insatiable cravings, and psychological drama.

The film parallels the stories of three lonely people: Katherine, unhappy in her marriage to a wealthy hunk, is a beautiful, but bored housewife, ardently pursued by Trinh, an enigmatic waitress who wears a blonde wig and sunglasses 24 hours a day. Phil — a lonely, dejected accountant — yearns for love, and fears that his unrequited lust is transforming him into a regular werewolf.

Shopping for Fangs is a fiercely independent account of issues affecting the new generation of Asian Americans today: identity, culture, ego, and self-imposed limitations based on an idealized perception of how life should be. What you are is definitely less important than who you are and who you think you are.

Shopping for Fangs debuts with exclusive engagements starting May 8, in New York City at the City Cinema's Village East Cinemas, in Los Angeles at the Mann Westwood Complex and Edward Cinemas in Orange County and Alhambra, and in the San Francisco Bay Area at the Landmark's Opera Plaza and Shattuck Cinemas. Go check it out!



More Fang Bytes

David Eng

A common putdown of Asian American art is that it's been done already, that a good deal of the material is old and tired.

A year ago, an editorial in a local Asian American newspaper called for an end to traumatized-Asian-kid- being-called-Chink stories, and notice all the Asian women collectively rolling their eyes when being subjected to another tale of Asian-male-angst. Whether it's because of historical misrepresentation Suzie Wong-style or Amy Tan "exoti-ploitation," there's a wariness surrounding Asian American art and what it tries to represent, either because of staleness or because of representations becoming the limiting stereotypes of tomorrow.

So where does *Shopping For Fangs*, the debut feature by Asian American filmmakers Quentin Lee and Justin Lin, fall into all of this? Lee and Lin have established themselves in the hazy Asian American film circuit world, and are the first of their generation to go big (Greg Araki, having never considered himself Asian, doesn't count).

Shopping follows the adjacent lives of four central characters living in suburban Southern California. Katherine is a Viet-yuppie housewife who complains to her therapist of blackouts and the undesirable sexual advances of her beefy corporate Asian-jock husband. Trinh, a spunky, blonde wig touting waitress at the trans-cultural Go-Go Diner, comes across Katherine's unattended cellular phone and wallet in a bathroom and promptly steals them. Seemingly at whim, Trinh strikes up a relationship with the vacant Katherine over her own phone, to which Katherine surreptitiously responds to out of loneliness and longing. Phil, an Asian American guy whose job in some nondescript company is to push the paycheck cart, just can't get no respect. That is, until he begins having a strange problem with his hair

growth. And finally there's Jim, a Singaporean expatriate who frequents Go-Go where he meets Trinh. Once each others' respective homosexuality is established, Jim acts mostly as a spectator to the wireless interplay between Trinh and Katherine.

While all four of these characters are Asian American, the film makes no overt gestures of Asian Americana. The closes it comes to pop Asian American politics is an initial scene between Phil and his sister's new boyfriend, a smarmy Asia Society type who points out the Taiwanese word for chicken. Even this tension is downplayed as the movie instead focuses on the afflictions of both Phil and Katherine resulting from their dismal positions in modern society.

Lee and Lin's strategy of representation is a pastiche of non-stop referencing; symbols are tossed about without really dwelling on them. It seems to be the intention of the film to create a feel for the world in which these characters inhabit, rather than draw conscious attention to an Asian specific. In some ways, the Asian identity of the characters is secondary. Rather than an Asian woman suffering from China Doll syndrome, Katherine plays more like the mysteriously weird housewife in Todd Haynes' *Safe*, and Phil's hairy development evokes more Nutty Professor than Asian militancy. *Shopping's* central themes are mainstream if you are cynical and universal if you are optimistic.

Shopping is noteworthy as a fresh view of Asian America as it strives to move beyond flat identity; attempting to portray Asians with some dimension other than the model minority stricture. The Asians here are either disgruntled, suicidal, or liberated in a homosexual twentysomething directionless bliss. "Live for today", as one of the characters' mottoes goes. Though the resolution ultimately offered is escapism, *Shopping's* heart is in the right place making it worthy of a trip to the theater.

Whazzzzuppp !!!!!!!

Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival

Sun., May 3 - Union Square Park (17th & Broadway) from noon to 6:00 pm. On stage performances by Master Norman Chin and the Southern Praying Mantis Kung-Fu School (Chinese Lion Dance), Super Chink (Rap), Center for Korean American Culture (Korean Drumming), Nhan (Vietnamese Percussion), Soh Daiko (Japanese Drumming), Acoustic Maya (Contemporary Folk), Second Generation Productions (Musical Theatre), Kathak Ensemble (Indian Dance & Music), Kinding Sindaw (Philippine Tribal Dances), George Gee & His Orchestra (Big Band) and Swing Masa Band (Jazz). Over 80 organizations will participate.

Asian American Writers' Workshop

April/May - Black Lightning Reading & Panel. The opening celebration for the release of *Black Lightning: Poetry in Progress*, a collection of essays & interviews showcasing Asian American poets. The evening will feature poetry readings from the various contributors to the anthology.

Wed. May 13-Sun. May 17 — Peeling the Banana. The Asian American Writers' Workshop theatre group will attempt to dispel Asian American stereotypes with their new performance pieces.

Thurs. May 28 — Bamboo Girls, 7pm. Co-sponsored by Arkipelago, it'll be an evening of live music and poetry to honor the popular 'zine that defies Asian American female stereotypes. Meet Bamboo Girl herself!

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN JOURNAL announces its submission guidelines for general submissions and a special section on e-mails on literature: Deadline: August 15, 1998

Asian American Writers' Workshop, 37 St. Mark's Place, New York, NY 10003-7801 (212) 228-6718; fax: (212) 228-7718; aaww@panix.com; <http://www.panix.com/~aaww>

Asian American International Film Festival

Mid-July to mid-August

The festival is organized by Asian CineVision, a NYC-based national media arts center. Created in 1978, this film festival is the country's oldest showcase for works by Asian & Asian-American filmmakers. After its NY premiere, the fest will embark on a 10-month tour of North America. Contact: Festival Director, Asian American Film, International Film Festival, Asian CineVision, 32 East Broadway, 4th Fl., New York, NY 10002, (212) 925-8685; E-mail: ACVinNYC@aol.com

Asian Women in Business

Asian Women in Business (AWIB) will have an opening for a full-time Program Associate in July, 1998. AWIB is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization, offering technical assistance and training to the small business owner. AWIB fills a vital need for Asian women who need information, education and networking opportunities to start or expand their businesses. Through a variety of programs, workshops, conferences, networking receptions and one-on-one counseling sessions, AWIB works toward its goal of assisting Asian women in realizing their entrepreneurial potential. For more information, contact Ms. Y. Kim, Asian Women in Business, 1 West 34th St., Suite 200, New York, NY 10001. (212) 868-1368; fax (212) 868-1373.

May

- August

Asia Society

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Sun., May 3, 3pm

An Afternoon with Bill Viola
Acclaimed video artist Bill Viola talks with Vishakha N. Desai, Director of the Asia Society Galleries, about the spiritual aspects of his work and his sources for inspiration including Sufism and Zen Buddhism. This program coincides with a 25-year retrospective exhibition of his work on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art through May 10. Reception follows. \$15; \$10 Asia Society/Whitney Museum members and students with valid ID. (212) 288-6400; fax (212) 744-8825; pr@asiasoc.org.

Mon., May 11, 6:30pm

An Evening with Arundhati Roy: The God of Small Things

Literary sensation Arundhati Roy reads from her extraordinary Booker Prize-winning novel, an intricately plotted and densely textured tale of childhood memory and family ruin set in the Southern Indian state of Kerala. Book signing and reception follow. \$15; \$10 members.

Until Sun., August 16

More than Meets the Eye: Japanese Art in the Asia Society Collection

What questions do we ask of Japanese art today? How are they different from the ones we asked 20 years ago when the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection was given to the Asia Society? And what does it mean to say that an object looks "Japanese"? This exhibition of 40 works from the Society's permanent collection includes paintings, prints, sculpture and ceramics from the Neolithic era to the modern period.

Taipei Gallery

Fri., May 22 - Thur., July 2

The Power of the Line: Contemporary Drawings by Twenty-two International Artists
Guest-curated by Kang L. Chung (New York), Aser But (Hong Kong), and Ying Ping Po (Taipei), the exhibition recognizes and celebrates this traditionally overlooked mode of expression. 22 artists currently living and working in the US, France, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China have been invited to participate.

Thurs., May 21-23, 7:30 pm; May 24, 2:00 pm

Godot Theater Company: *Taipei Animal Men*

A social satire on life in cosmopolitan Taipei.

1221 Ave. of the Americas (212) 373-1854

Asian American Federation of New York

Tuesday, May 19 - The Asian American Federation of New York will hold its fourth Annual Dinner Gala at Windows of the World. This year the Federation honors



Widower Wally Fukuda (Ron Nakahara, third from left) considers moving from Hawaii to Los Vegas, throwing the whole neighborhood into turmoil. *Pan Asian Repertory* presents *Aloha Las Vegas* by native Hawaiian playwright Edward Sakamoto, playing until Sat., May 16th at St. Clement's Theatre, 423 W. 46th St. (212) 505-5655.

Photo © Corky Lee.

Jeanette Chang, publisher of *Harper's Bazaar*, Gene Marcial, senior writer at *Business Week*, and Karen Wada, managing editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, with this year's Tribute to Excellence Award. For reservations, please call Sara Moose at (212) 344-5878, ext.13.

TESTIMONY: JAPANESE AMERICAN VOICES OF LIBERATION

Saturday May 9, 1998 2pm

Hosted by the Joseph Papp Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street between Astor Place and E. 4th Street. Reservations required for open seating. Pay at the door. \$20 for individuals \$15 for groups of 10 or more, seniors and students. Call: 212. 807-8104 leave your name, telephone #, and number of tickets requested.

Performing Artists: Mary Leslie Ishii; Darrell Kunitomi; Marcia Sakamoto-Wong; Alan Eto; Alan Muraoka; Gen Shinkai; Michael Ishii and Company; and SOH DAIKO

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